

Message Text

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SUBJ: ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL

REF: BUCHAREST 6597

1. ALTHOUGH IT NEVER WAS CLEAR WHETHER CEAUSESCU HAD WANTED TO SEE RABBI SCHINDLER NOW AS OPPOSED TO SOME TIME LATER, THE RABBI'S VISIT WAS VERY USEFUL. HIS TWO AND ONE-HALF HOUR SESSION WITH CEAUSESCU NOV 16 RANGED FROM CSCE TO JEWISH EMIGRATION TO THE WHOLE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. WITH PARTY SECRETARY ANDREI THE UN COMMITTEE OF 20 WAS THE MAIN TOPIC. OTHER APPOINTMENTS DID NOT MATERIALIZE AND RABBI SCHINDLER DID NOT INSIST ON THEM. RABBI ROSEN IS STILL ABROAD. THIS TELEGRAM FOCUSES ON EMIGRATION. SEPTTEL ON CSCE AND MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION FOLLOW.

2. CEAUSESCU TOOK A MUCH LESS EXAGGERATED LINE ON EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL IN THE SENSE THAT HE DID NOT REFER TO JEWS DIVERTING TO OTHER DESTINATIONS AND ONLY MENTIONED IN PASSING THE INCREASED NUMBER OF JEWS NOW WISHING TO RETURN TO ROMANIA. SPECIFICALLY, CEAUSESCU STATED AS ON OTHER OCCASIONS THAT ROMANIA IN PRINCIPLE IS OPPOSED TO EMIGRATION OF ANY SORT, BELIEVING IT FAR BETTER FOR CITIZENS OF A

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COUNTRY TO STAY AND CONTRIBUTE TO ITS PRSPERITY RATHER

THAN FLEE ELSEWHERE AFTER SOME ILLUSORY GAINS. IN PRACTICE, THOUGH, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT NEARLY 1/3 OF ISRAEL'S POPULATION WAS MADE UP OF JEWS FROM ROMANIA, IT WAS CLEAR THAT ROMANIA HAD NOT AND WAS NOT GOING TO KEEP ANYONE HERE BY FORCE. GRANTED THE NUMBER WHO WANTED TO LEAVE WOULD DECLINE, GIVEN THE SMALLER COMMUNITY HERE. IN ADDITION, NUMBERS WOULD BE LESS BECAUSE LIFE WAS NOW BETTER IN ROMANIA AND BECAUSE THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WAS NO GREAT INDUCEMENT TO EMIGRATE. IN FACT, THERE WAS NOW AN INCREASING NUMBER WHO WANTED TO RETURN TO ROMANIA. RABBI SCHINDLER STRESSED THAT IT WAS NOT THE AIM OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE THE DISSOLUTION OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES ANYWHERE, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES ITSELF, BUT THE PRESIDENT WOULD RECOGNIZE FROM JEWISH HISTORY THAT PROMISES MADE TO JEWS HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN KEPT. THEREFORE, REGARDLESS OF THE GOOD FAITH WHICH MIGHT CHARACTERIZE CURRENT PROMISES ABOUT FREEDOM TO EMIGRATE THERE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY JEWS WHO WANTED TO LEAVE BUT FELT THEY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED. CEAUSESCU SAID THAT WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS OF THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN SOME CLASSIFIED WORK WHOSE DEPARTURE WOULD BE DELAYED FOR SEVERAL YEARS, EVERYONE ELSE HAD BEEN AND WOULD BE APPROVED. HE SAID THERE WERE TO BE SURE DIFFICULT CASES AT TIMES AND WENT ON TO DISCUSS A MARRIAGE CASE INVOLVING AN AMERICAN 18 YEARS SENIOR TO HIS ROMANIAN FIANCEE.

3. RABBI SCHINDLER SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER AN INDIVIDUAL SITUATION. HE WAS THEREFORE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE KINDS OF CASES IN WHICH HE WAS INTERESTED WOULD BE HANDLED WITH SYMPATHY SINCE THAT WAS THE BURDEN OF HIS RAISING THE POINT. IF CASES DID COME TO HIS ATTENTION, HE WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR NICOLAE IN THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD BE RESOLVED TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL CONCERNED.

4. LATTER THE SAME EVENING RABBI SCHINDLER LEARNED FROM THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR THAT THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HAD JUST RECEIVED 200 PASSPORTS.

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5. COMMENT: RABBI SCHINDLER SAID AFTERWARDS HE HAD MISSED CEAUSESCU'S REFERENCE TO THE INCREASED NUMBER OF JEWS WANTING TO RETURN TO ROMANIA. OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE QUESTIONED HIM ON THAT POINT. IN MENTIONING THAT HE WOULD BRING CASES TO THE ATTENTION OF AMBASSADOR NICOLAE HE HAD IN MIND THE FACT THAT SINCE HIS VISIT IN AUGUST HE HAS ACCUMULATED A LIST OF SOME 150-200 NAMES.

HE PLANS TO PASS THESE ON TO NICOLAE FOLLOWING HIS
RETURN TO THE US.
BARNES

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